

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY ATHENS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2768

USMISSION GENEVA

CONFIDENTIAL SECTION 1 OF 2 ATHENS 1583

DEPARTMENT FOR DAVIES FROM AMBASSADOR

GENEVA PLEASE DELIVER AMBASSADOR TASCA

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR GR US

SUBJ: AMBASSADOR'S APPEARANCE BEFORE ROSENTHAL COMMITTEE

REF STATE 048279

1. FOLLOWING IS DRAFT INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT AMBASSADOR PROPOSES MAKE BEFORE ROSENTHAL SUB-COMMITTEE, WITH OTHER POINTS TO BE COVERED AS THEY MAY COME UP IN RESPONSE TO SPECIFIC QUESTIONS. MESSAGE BEING REPEATED GENEVA FOR POSSIBLE FURTHER COMMENTS BY AMBASSADOR TASCA.

2. QUOTE. MR. CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS OF THE SUB-COMMITTEE: IT IS A PLEASURE FOR ME TO APPEAR AGAIN BEFORE THIS COMMITTEE TO DISCUSS GREECE. BEFMRE ADDRESSING MYSELF TO ANY SPECIFIC QUESTIONS YOU MAY HAVE, I THOUGHT IT WOULD BE USEFUL FOR ME TO MAKE SOME GENERAL PRELIMINARY REMARKS.

3. FROM THE STANDPOINT OF US-GREEK RELATIONS, ALTHOUGH THE SITUATION HAS NOT MARKEDLY CHANGED, THERE HAVE BEEN A NUMBER OF DEVELOPMENTS IN THE GREEK SITUATION SINCE I MET WITH THIS COMMITTEE IN AUGUST 1971. U.S. POLICY TOWARD GREECE AT THAT TIME WAS TWO-PRONGED IN CHARACTER. FIRST OF ALL, IT REFLECTED THE MUTUAL SECURITY INTERESTS OF BOTH GREECE AND THE U.S. IN THE EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN,

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PARTICULARLY IN THE CONTEXT OF OUR RELATIONSHIP WITHIN

NATO. SECOND, IT EMPHASIZED OUR CONVICTION THAT GREECE SHOULD RETURN TO POLITICAL NORMALITY AND REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT. OUR DAY TO DAY RELATIONS WITH THE GOVERNMENT OF GREECE WERE CONDUCTED IN LIGHT OF THIS POLICY. AS AMBASSADOR I TOOK OCCASION OF EVERY OPPORTUNITY TO REMIND LEADING OFFICIALS OF THE GREEK GOVERNMENT OF THE NEED FOR POLITICAL PROGRESS AND THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN POLITICAL NORMALITY AND OUR SHARED SECURITY INTERESTS.

4. THERE WERE SOME RELATIVELY ENCOURAGING DEVELOPMENTS. IN THE EARLY FALL OF 1971 A MAJOR RESHUFFLE OF THE PAPADOPOULOS CABINET TOOK PLACE, AS A RESULT OF WHICH A NUMBER OF EX-MILITARY OFFICERS WERE SUCCEEDED BY TECHNICIANS. IN DECEMBER A CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE ON LEGISLATION WAS ESTABLISHED. ON JANUARY 1, 1972 THEN PRIME MINISTER PAPADOPOULOS LIFTED MARTIAL LAW EXCEPT FOR THESSALONIKI AND ATHENS/PIRAEUS, AND AT THE END OF THE YEAR MARTIAL LAW WAS LIFTED IN THESSALONIKI. VIEWED FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF SUBSEQUENT DEVELOPMENTS, ANOTHER INTERESTING CHANGE TOOK PLACE TOWARD THE END OF MARCH 1972 WHEN THE PRIME MINISTER REMOVED GENERAL ZOITAKIS AS REGENT AND PERSONALLY ASSUMED THE RESPONSIBILITIES, LARGEMLY CEREMONIAL, OF THAT OFFICE.

5. IN 1973 A SERIES OF EVENTS TOOK PLACE, WHICH IN RETROSPECT APPARENTLY SET THE STAGE FOR THE NOVEMBER 25 COUP. IN THE SPRING, PROBLEMS IN THE UNIVERSITIES, WHICH HAD BRIEFLY SURFACED THE PRECEDING AUTUMN, BECAME RELATIVELY ACUTE; FOR EXAMPLE AN EIGHT-WEEK STRIKE TOOK PLACE AT ATHENS UNIVERSITY. GROWING INFLATION AND VARIOUS OTHER ECONOMIC DIFFICULTIES POSED A NEW SERIES OF PROBLEMS FOR THE GOVERNMENT. IN THE LAST WEEK OF MAY, A NAVY LED ATTEMPTED COUP WAS ABORTED. THESE DEVELOPMENTS PRODUCED AN IMMEDIATE REACTION FROM THE PAPADOPOULOS GOVERNMENT. ON JUNE 1 THE PRIME MINISTER DECLARED GREECE A REPUBLIC, NAMING HIMSELF TO THE PRESIDENCY, AND THE THEN-HEAD OF THE HELLENIC ARMED FORCES, GENERAL ODYSSEUS ANGELIS, VICE PRESIDENT. PAPADOPOULOS ALSO ANNOUNCED CHANGES IN THE GREEK CONSTITUTION, THE EFRECT OF WHICH EXPANDED HIS ALREADY ENHANCED EXECUTIVE POWERS BY ADDING EXCLUSIVE AUTHORITY IN THE KEY FIELDS OF FOREIGN POLICY,

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DEFENSE AND INTERNAL SECURITY. HE TOLD THE GREEK PEOPLE THAT A REFERENDUM WOULD BE HELD ON JULY 29 TO GIVE THEM THE OPPORTUNITY TO CONFIRM THE CHANGES HE HAD ALREADY PUT INTO EFFECT.

6. THE REFERENDUM TOOK PLACE IN CIRCUMSTANCES LITERALLY IMPELLING INDIVIDUAL GREEKS TO VOTE "YES" DESPITE WIDE-SPREAD DENUNCIATION OF ITS FRAUDULENT, STAGE-MANAGED

CHARACTER, ABORAD AND FROM GREEKS FORMERLY ACTIVE IN POLITICAL LIFE. WE EXPRESSED OUR OWN CONCERN DIRECTLY TO PRESIDENT PAPADPOULOS. PRIME MINISTER PAPADPOULOS MADE CLEAR WELL IN ADVANCE OF THE REFERENDUM, FOR EXAMPLE, THAT WHATEVER ITS OUTCOME, GREECE WOULD REMAIN A REPUBLIC, HE WOULD CONTINUE TO SERVE AS ITS PRESIDENT UNTIL 1981, AND THE CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGES HE HAD ALREADY MADE WOULD REMAIN IN EFFECT. THE RESULT OF THE REFERENDUM WAS A VOTE OF NEARLY 75 PERCENT AFFIRMING THE REPUBLIC AND PAPADPOULOS AS ITS PRESIDENT.

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7. IN HIS INAUGURAL ADDRESS ON AUGUST 19, PRESIDENT PAPADPOULOS ANNOUNCED THE LIFTING OF MARTIAL LAW, THE AMNESTY OF POLITICAL PRISONERS AND THE IMMINENT APPOINTMENT OF THE CONSTITUTIONAL COURT, WHICH, UNDER THE CONSTITUTION, WAS TO LAY THE BASIS FOR POLITICAL LIFE, INCLUDING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF POLITICAL PARTIES. FINALLY, HE PROMISED THAT ELECTIONS WOULD BE HELD BY THE END OF 1974.

8. ON OCTOBER 8 A NEW CABINET WAS SWORN IN WITH SPYROS MMARKEZINIS, A FORMER MINISTER AND LEADER OF THE SO-CALLED PROGRESSIVE PARTY, AS PRIME MINISTER. MARKEZINIS ANNOUNCED AS HIS PLATFORM " 3 F'S-- FORGIVE, FORGET AND FREE ELECTIONS. HE REPEATEDLY DECLARED HIS PURPOSE WAS TO ARRANGE FOR "IRREPROACHABLE ELECTIONS" AT THE EARLIEST FEASIBLE DATE.

9. ON NOVEMBER 14, HOWEVER, A STUDENT "SIT-IN" BEGAN AT THE POLYTECHNION UNIVERSITY IN ATHENS WHICH GREW IN PROPORTIONS TO THE POINT THAT ON NOVEMBER 16 THE POLICE FOUND THEMSELVES INCAPABLE OF CONTROLLING THE SITUATION. EARLY IN THE MORNING OF

NOVEMBER 17 THE ARMY WAS REQUESTED TO ASSIST IN THE MAINTENANCE OF ORDER, TANKS BROKE DOWN THE MAIN GATES OF THE UNIVERSITY AND THE STUDENTS WERE DISPERSED. MARTIAL LAW WAS REINSTITUTED THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY. A PRESS CONFERENCE SCHEDULED BY PRIME MINISTER MARKEZINIS FOR THAT DAY, AT WHICH IT HAD BEEN WIDELY SPECULATED HE WOULD ANNOUNCE SPECIFIC PLANS FOR ELECTIONS, WAS CANCELLED. THERE FOLLOWED AN UNEASY WEEK DURING WHICH ATHENS REMAINED UNDER MARTIAL LAW WHICH WAS FINALLY LIFTED ON THE NIGHT OF NOVEMBER 24.

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7. AS THE COMMITTEE IS AWARE, EARLY ON NOVEMBER 25, 1973 A COUP LED BY MILITARY ASSOCIATES OF THEN PRESIDENT PAPADOPOULOS RESULTED IN HIS REMOVAL FROM OFFICE. THE REASONS BEHIND THE COUP WERE VARIED AND COMPLICATED. THEY INCLUDE SUCH MATTERS AS STUDENT PROBLEMS, GROWING INFLATION, CHARGES OF CORRUPTION AND CONCERN IN SOME QUARTERS THAT PAPADOPOULOS HAD ABANDONED THE ORIGINAL OBJECTIVES OF THE APRIL 21, 1967 "REVOLUTION AND WAS ONLY INTERESTED IN MAINTAINING AND EXPANDING HIS PERSONAL POWER. WHATEVER THE REASONS, THE FACT IS THAT THE PRESENT REGIME EFFECTIVELY SEIZED CONTROL AND IS NOW GOVERNING GREECE.

8. FOR THE PRESENT MARTIAL LAW REMAINS IN EFFECT, AND PRESS AND OTHER MEDIA ARE CLOSELY CONTROLLED. GIVEN THESE RESTRICTIONS IT IS DIFFICULT, IF NOT IMPOSSIBLE, TO GAUGE GREEK OPINION. HOWEVER, AN ATTITUDE OF WATCHFUL AND CONCERNED WAITING, AT LEAST ON THE PART OF MOST CIVILIANS, PREVAILS. SOME FORMER POLITICIANS FAVOR THE FORMATION OF A GOVERNMENT OF NATIONAL UNITY TO LEAD THE COUNTRY TO ELECTIONS AND RESTORATION OF PARLIAMENTARY GOVERNMENT. WHETHER SUCH A GOVERNMENT WILL EVENTUALLY EMERGE FROM THE PRESENT SITUATION REMAINS UNCLEAR.

9. PRIME MINISTER ANDROUTSOPoulos HAS STATED PUBLICLY THAT THE GOVERNMENT INTENDS TO PREPARE THE COUNTRY FOR "UNDISTURBED AND GENUINE DEMOCRATIC LIFE" AND PROMISED THAT A NEW CONSTITUTION WILL BE DRAFTED. NO TIMETABLE, HOWEVER, HAS BEEN ANNOUNCED, AND THE PRIME MINISTER HAS DONE NO MORE THAN PROCLAIM THAT "WHEN THE COUNTRY IS READY IT WILL BE LED TO ELECTIONS. THE PRESIDENT, GENERAL GHIZIKIS, HAS MADE SIMILARLY UNSPECIFIC COMMITMENTS.

10. WE CONTINUE TO BELIEVE THAT OUR NATIONAL INTERESTS AND THE NATIONAL INTERESTS OF GREECE, IN PARTICULAR GROWING OUT OF THE MUTUAL SECURITY INTERESTS SHARED BY BOTH COUNTRIES THROUGH OUR COMMON MEMBERSHIP IN NATO AND THE CONTINUING STRATEGIC SIGNIFICANCE OF OUR POSITION IN THE EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN, REQUIRE A SATISFACTORY WORKING ELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE TWO GOVERNMENT. THESE WORKING RELATIONS DO NOT IMPLY EITHER APPROVAL

OR DISAPPROVAL OF THE FORM OF GOVERNMENT IN GREECE. THE ROLE THE
U.S. CAN PLAY IN GREECE'S POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT IS NECESSARILY
LIMITED. OUR POSITION REFLECTS THE PRINCIPLE LAID DOWN IN THE
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CHARTER OF THE UNITED NATIONS THAT STATES SHOULD REFRAIN FROM
INTERVENTION IN THE DOMESTIC AFFAIRS OF OTHERS. AS THE
COMMITTEE IS AWARE, WE HAVE CONSISTENTLY STATED OUR BELIEF THAT A
POLITICAL SYSTEM PROVIDING A GOVERNMENT MANDATED BY THE PEOPLE
IS THE BEST ASSURANCE OF STABILITY IN GREECE. WE BELIEVE,
HOWEVER, THAT THE WAY MUST BE FOUND BY THE GREEKS THEMSELVES AND
CANNOT BE IMPOSED BY OUTSIDERS.

1. WITHIN THIS FRAMEWORK, OUR HOPE NATURALLY REMAINS THAT GREECE
WILL FIND ITS WAY PEACEFULLY TO THE STATED OBJECTIVE OF THE
PRESENT GOVERNMENT, I.E., "AN UNDISTURBED AND GENUINE DEMOCRATIC
LIFE."

12. I SHALL BE GLAD NOW TO TRY TO ANSWER ANY QUESTIONS THAT YOU
HAVE.

BRANDIN

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